



DIocese OF CHARLOTTE

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

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A statement from the Bishop of Charlotte:

Fed up with the news lately? Ask yourself: What will I do?

CHARLOTTE — In response to recent national and local tragedies, Bishop Michael Martin, OFM Conv., of Charlotte offers the following reflection, urging people of faith to reject despair and choose concrete acts of peace:

In the wake of recent tragedies – a random stabbing here in Charlotte, a mass shooting at a Minneapolis church, and the assassination of a national political activist in Utah – we are all left reeling at the evil that plagues our broken world. While these high-profile losses dominate headlines, we also know there are countless daily acts of violence in our neighborhoods and around the world that rarely make the news.

Precious lives are cut short and families are left grieving, broken, and facing an uncertain future. In moments like these, we can feel helpless and rightfully cry out to our leaders to do something to stop the madness. But are we really powerless?

As Christians, we know the answer is no. We believe in a God who has empowered us with not only the creativity and abilities of our humanity, but also with His grace to make a difference in our world. The Sept. 7 canonizations of St. Pier Giorgio Frassati and St. Carlo Acutis remind us ordinary people can have an extraordinary impact. We must look within ourselves and ask the simple question: “What will I do?”

“I have the strength for everything through him who empowers me,” (Phil 4:13) St. Paul says to us this day and every day. We are more capable than we realize and, in moments like this, called to recommit ourselves to the ways of Jesus – the only path to healing, peace, and salvation for our broken world. Each of us needs to find specific and personal ways to turn away from the anger that leads to violence, and instead choose to foster understanding and reach out in love to walk with those who are struggling.

If I may suggest three concrete ways we can all actively engage in peacemaking:

- Fast for a time from social media and its vitriol, and instead spend that time reading Sacred Scripture.
- Speak and act with charity, especially in face-to-face and online conversations with those you disagree with.
- Reach out to someone you know is struggling in some way and spend time with them.

These actions may sound small – even naïve – but saints including St. Pier Giorgio Frassati and St. Carlo Acutis, once dismissed in the same way, now inspire millions. Look at what they accomplished (and continue to accomplish) with God’s grace. As St. Paul reminds us, “Where sin abounds, grace abounds all the more” (Rom 5:20). May we choose grace, and use our gifts to bring peace to our own small corner of the world.

– *Bishop Michael Martin, OFM Conv., leads the Catholic Diocese of Charlotte, which encompasses 540,000 Catholics and 93 churches, 20 schools, and more than 50 ministries across western North Carolina.*